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CONSIDERATIONS

On the STATE of the

BRITISH FISHERIES

IN

AMERICA,

And their CONSEQUENCE to

GREAT BRITAIN.

WITH

PROPOSALS for their SECURITY,

By the REDUCTION of

CAPE-BRETON, &c.

WHICH WERE

Humbly offer'd, by a Gentleman of a Large Trade of the City of LONDON, to His MAJESTY'S MINISTERS, in January 1744-5.

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Printed for W. BICKERTON, in the Temple-Exchange, near the Inner-Temple-Gate, Fleet-ſtreet. MDCC XLV.

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IN the years 1738, to 1741, inclusive, were employ'd in Newfoundland, per annum, From Cape-Race, along the eastern shoar, to Cape-Bonavista, St. John's being near the centre ——— 870
From Cape-Bonavista northward ——— 80
From Cape-Race, westwards, including Placentia 360
Fishing-boats per annum 1310

1310 boats, at a moderate computation, catch ——— 420,000 quintals of fish
The ships fishing on the banks of Newfoundland catch ——— 30,000 annually.
In all 450,000 per ann.

These

These 450,000 quintals of fish produce	2250	tons of train-oil.
Seal-oil caught in the winter	400	tons.
Tons of oil per annum	2650	

	£.
450,000 quintals of fish yields at market, on an average, 10l. per quintal is	225,000
2650 tons of oil, sold in England at 20l. per ton is	53,000
1200 tierces of salmon, caught per ann. yields 3l. per ton, is	3,600
Furs caught in the winter worth	4,000
On a moderate computation the annual produce is	285,600

The trade of Newfoundland requires above 25,000 tons of shipping to be employ'd therein annually; and there are about 8000 people, in the fisheries and the ships which carry off the produce.

New England hath also a very considerable fishery at two seasons in the year, which they call the summer and winter fisheries; the former begins the 1st of June, and ends the 1st of September; the latter commences the beginning of October, and ends the 1st of May: The fish caught in both are reckon'd to be worth 70 to 80,000l. The chief of the fish caught in both these colonies is sent, in time of peace, to Spain, Portugal, and Italy; and some small quantities go to our West-India islands, particularly Jamaica, which is mostly the inferior sort.

Great quantities of bread, flour, &c. are sent from Great Britain, New York, and Philadelphia; as also many cargoes of beef, pork, butter, &c. from Ireland; annually, for the use of the people at Newfoundland.

The people employ'd in the Newfoundland fishery mostly go in the spring, annually, from Pool, Dartmouth, and other of our western ports; and a great many fresh land-men are always taken, who mostly come home in autumn, tho' some are shipp'd there in the vessels which carry off the fish to foreign markets. These are, by the time they

they come home, become pretty good ſailors; and 'tis certain theſe fiſheries are ſome of the beſt nurſeries for ſailors that we have; for 'tis a laborious buſineſs, and they employ'd in it endure all weathers; the ſailors rais'd therein are inur'd to hardſhips, and yet grow ſtrong, from the healthfulneſs of the northern climate.

The ſhipping us'd in theſe fiſheries require great quantities of ſail-cloth, (now a valuable manufacture of our own, which heretofore we were ſupply'd with from the Dutch) cordage, iron-work, &c. in which trade abundance of people in theſe kingdoms get good livelyhoods for themſelves and families.

The French, by the treaty of Utrecht, were admitted to fiſh from Cape-Bonavista (on the iſland Newfoundland) to the northern point of the iſland, and from thence running down by the weſtern ſide to Cape or Point-Riche, and no further; and were allow'd to dry their fiſh on land, within theſe limits; which they have continued to do ever ſince; and not only ſo, but have greatly encroach'd on that liberty, by extending their fiſhery down on that ſide of the land to Cape-Ray; and, to juſtify this, they have made Point-Riche in their maps to be but 16 leagues from the north end of the iſland Breton; whereas that which they ſo miſcall is Cape-Ray, and Point-Rich lies 56 leagues more northerly, up the bay of St. Laurence: and ſince the commencement of the war with Spain, the French have found the ſweets of ſupplying the Spaniſh markets; which will doubtleſs induce them yet to extend their fiſheries as much as poſſible.

By the treaty of Utrecht we unhappily exchanged Cape-Breton for Placentia, and gave the French the aforeſaid liberty on Newfoundland; ſince which they have carry'd on an unbounded fiſhery, wherein, 'tis aſſerted, and by good judges, that they employ a thouſand ſail of ſhips annually, from 200 to 400 tons burthen, and 20,000 men on board them. There was a computation made in the year 1730, that there was then lying at Marſeilles, for a market, 220,000 quintals of cod-fiſh: And 'tis judg'd that they cure (communibus annis) above five millions of quintals.

The

The next neceſſary conſideration reſpecting the trade and fiſhery of Newfoundland is (in my humble apprehenſion) how to ſecure it againſt the French. And I think there can be no way of doing it effectually, but by regaining the iſland of Breton from the French.

And in order thereto, 'tis propos'd,

That five ſhips, of 50 Guns each, with one or two old regiments, and proper artillery and warlike ſtores, ſhould be ſent from hence to Boſton ſo early in the ſpring as to ſail from thence the 20th of April 1745, for Cape-Breton, that being as ſoon, or ſooner, than any veſſels can arrive there from France.

That orders ſhould be forthwith ſent to all our North-American colonies, more eſpecially New England and New York, directing the Governors there to make immediate preparation, by raiſing men, and diſciplining of them, to be in readineſs for an expedition, on the arrival of the ſaid five men of war from hence at Boſton.

That the men ſo raiſed ſhould be commanded by ſome of his Majeſty's experienced officers; that the officers under them in the reſpective regiments ſhould be gentlemen of the country; that the troops be ſubſiſted by the reſpective provinces; and that they be paid by his majeſty, as his regular troops here.

That theſe troops leave Boſton ſo as to reach the iſland of Breton by the time the five men of war may be off it at ſea, in order to make an attack at once both by ſea and land: and as there are no cannon commanding the entrance of Gaberoſe-Bay, which is within four miles of the rampart of Lewiſburgh, the men of war, with the fleet, may ſafely ride there, and will prevent any aſſiſtance to the place by ſea, while the troops by land do the like; ſo that the want of proviſions may probably oblige them to ſurrender the place ſoon.

Some ſmaller, nimble men of war, or ſloops, full of men, might at the ſame time be uſefully employ'd in cruizing on the banks of Newfoundland, and off the coaſt of North America, as well to ſecure our own, as to annoy the French, trade; and particularly to prevent their correſpondence

reſpondence from old France to the gulph of St. Laurence and Quebec; for otherwiſe they will probably annoy our North American ſettlements from thence, and inſtigate the Indians on the back of us to diſturb our people, and draw them from the deſign againſt Cape-Breton.

Theſe propoſals may ſeem to require a certain great expence; and tho' that is allow'd, 'tis apprehended to be well worth it; for, if we recover the iſland of Breton again, we not only ſecure our own Newfoundland and New England fiſheries, but ſhall deprive the French of theirs, which is now ſo valuable to them; as alſo of the Key to their ſettlements in North America, on the back of ours. And what is yet a greater benefit to us, and loſs to them, they will have no port for their ſhips to lie in on the continent, to ſecure them from us in time of war, nor to ſend out their men of war or privateers from, to endanger our trade; which as well from our ſugar iſlands, as both to and from North America, muſt come in the way of them, while Breton continues in their hands.

Had France been deprived thereof, on the breaking out of the preſent war with them, how probable it is that their Eaſt India ſhips, and about forty others, which are lately arrived from Cape-Breton at Port l' Orient, would have fallen into our hands.

If they are ſuffer'd to remain in poſſeſſion of it, may it not reaſonably be expected that our ſettlements and fiſhery at Newfoundland will be deſtroy'd by them? That tho' they were not to get any thing immediately by doing it, they may then have the fiſh-markets of Portugal, Spain, and Italy, wholly to themſelves?

All which is humbly ſubmitted.

London, January 11, 1744.

SINCE the foregoing, I have a letter from Philadelphia, with the following paragraph, dated 8, September, 1744:

" By

"By a letter from New York of the 3d Inſtant, we "had intelligence, that a 70, 56, 44, and 26 gun ſhips "are arriv'd at Cape-Breton from France; that they had "with them 18 merchant-ſhips, from 20 to 26 guns, "and from 70 to 80 men each; that they carried with "them men, ammunition, and ſtores, for a new 70 gun "ſhip, ready at Quebec; and that they have now 1200 "regular troops at Cape-Breton. This news takes up "our attention at preſent."

Letter from one of the principal engineers before Cape-Breton.

"ON June 17, the governor ſurrender'd to us the town and forts "of Lewiſburgh. We had ſome time before taken the Vigi-"lante man of war of 64 guns, laden with ammunition and other "ſtores, valued at 60,000l. ſterling: and ſix other ſhips beſides, la-"den with ſtores and proviſions. Without the taking of theſe prizes, "it had been abſolutely impoſſible for us to ſucceed, notwithſtanding "the ardour and good conduct of our land and ſea forces: for it is "the ſtrongeſt harbour in the Weſt Indies. The French engineer "told me, the fortifying it had coſt two millions of livres; and if we "keep it well garriſon'd, and ſupply'd with ſtores, I may venture to "pronounce it impregnable. It is the key to North America, as Gi-"raltar is to the Mediterranean. By this conqueſt, the French fiſh-"ery is entirely ruin'd; their trade up the river of St. Lawrence, and "to Canada, is commanded; and their homeward-bound Indiamen, "who us'd to put in here, in their return, for proviſions and ſtores, "are depriv'd of all recourſe; ſo that it is the ſevereſt blow that could "have been given to the enemy, and in the very tendereſt part.

"Embraſures (or port-holes) in the town-wall, 148.
"Cannon mounted, 64.
"Embraſures in the grand-battery, 31. Cannon 30.
"Embraſures in the iſland-battery, 36. Cannon 31.
"Mortars, of 13 inches bore, 10.
"Mortars of 9 inches, 6.
"And almoſt all the balls were 42 pounders."

FINIS.